

HELLMOUTH

AN EPIC SPIRIT of the Fiend Constellation

Hellmouth is both a creature and a place. Sages describe it as a flaming worm-like monstrosity with a gullet that once acted as a passable tunnel between the underworld and mortal realms. Indeed, Hellmouth once wallowed for eons in the Malebolge Moors, a swamp-like obvilion ruled by devils in a time that history has forgotten. The buzzing, humid moors were home to citadels with torture chambers, and the surrounding muck was the final resting place for evil souls reborn as revolting giant worms and insects. When the Malebolge Moors were cast into the Outer Darkness to become a Remnant, Hellmouth was rended to bits and its vile soul seemingly vanquished forever. But Hellmouth clung to the damned as a drowning man clings to bits of flotsam; some of the damned in time became demons and devils, and through them an epic pactmaker can bind Hellmouth to his own soul.

Development & Summoning

You must develop a unique seal and ceremony in order to seal a pact with Hellmouth.

Binding DC: base 66, reduced by 2 for each of the following criteria you design into your seal and ceremony.

- » A tiefling, half-fiend, fiend or other fiend-blooded creature.
- » Any evil alignment.
- » Have 20+ ranks in Intimidate or Knowledge (religion).
- » Give birth to a half-fiend.
- » Have intimate relations with a succubus (or incubus).
- » Have visited the Malebolge Remnant before 20th level.
- » Hold an evil-aligned artifact in your left hand.
- » Offer a corpse of a celestial, good-aligned cleric or paladin.
- » Possess one or more levels in the Atlan Demon Binder or Lemurian Devil Binder prestige classes.
- » Slay a demon or devil at least one size larger than you and nestle inside its revolting body for at least 1 minute.
- » Summon Hellmouth within an unholy sanctum.
- » Was once lawful good but no longer.

Granted Abilities

Hellmouth grants you 4 abilities from the list below. You may select one additional ability for every 10 points you roll above the binding DC.

Apocalypse of the Sky: Up to 3 times daily, you evoke a terrible storm straight from the foul depths of the afterlife. The storm slowly forms over a 10 minute period, during which time you must concentrate each round as a move action; if you cease concentrating then the storm dissipates. After 10 minutes, the storm unleashes its fury over a 2-mile-radius area. All creatures and structures in the area suffer 6d6 sonic damage, 6d6 electricity damage, 6d6 fire damage, and 6d6 bludgeoning damage from brimstone and scorching howling winds. Creatures that have solid cover (such as in a stone building or underground) may attempt a Fortitude save for half damage.

Eternal Damnation: When you touch a creature with a soul within 3 rounds of its death, it must attempt a Will save (as if it were alive). If it fails, it immediately rises from death to a state of supernatural life and transforms into a fiend of equal level. If there is no fiend of the target's level, choose a fiend of similar level. If the target succeeds on its save, then the ability has no

effect and the target's soul proceeds to the afterlife as usual. A creature with a chaotic alignment becomes a chaotic evil demon; similarly, a creature with a lawful alignment becomes a lawful evil devil. Clerics and paladins enjoy a +4 bonus on their save. A *miracle* or *wish* spell reverses the effect. Your daily uses equal your level.

Evoke Hellmouth: This works like *gate* except it is limited to opening a portal to any evil-aligned plane and also, fiends within 5 miles of the gate (on either side) are immediately alerted to its presence. You can use this ability three times daily and you can only maintain one gate a time.

Faustian Bargain: Once daily, you place a lean on your soul in order to gain for 24 hours powerful magic of your choice. You may select up to 9 spells from any class spell list, no two of which may be of the same level. You use the spells as spell-like abilities. Your effective caster level equals your binder level and the DCs are Charisma-based. If you die while the bargain is in effect, your soul proceeds to the Malebolge Remnant and you cannot be restored to life by any means except a *miracle* or *wish* spell. If you do not die, the contract ends and you are free.

Fiendish Army: You cause nearby creatures to acquire fiendish qualities. You can affect up to one creature per level, all of whom must be within 30 feet of each other. The creatures can have Hit Dice up to one-half your binder level. Evil creatures get no save to resist even if they are unwilling. Neutral creatures get a Will save to resist; if they fail, their alignment moves to evil and they are affected. Good creatures are unaffected.

Affected creatures enjoy darkvision 60 ft, damage reduction 10/magic, resistance 10 to cold and fire, immunity to poison, spell resistance 25, and a vile smite usable once daily that inflicts +20 profane damage against good foes. Moreover, intimate relations automatically result in pregnancy and a half-fiend child rapidly comes to term in 9 days. The offspring is friendly to its parents only if they are evil. A *remove curse* spell or greater magic ends the pregnancy.

The effect lasts 24 hours or until ended by you. The soul of a creature that dies while affected by this magic proceeds to the Malebolge Remnant rather than its usual destination in the afterlife.

Fiendish Conversion: A touched creature slowly turns evil and then transforms into a fiend. You need only succeed on a touch attack to begin the process. Each day at midnight beginning on the first evening, the target must succeed on a Will save or move one step closer to neutral evil. If and when it becomes neutral evil, the creature begins a latent stage for a number of days equal to its Hit Dice. When those days pass, the conversion restarts; each day, the creature must succeed on a Will save or transform into a fiend of equal level. The conversion process can be halted or reversed by a *miracle* or *wish* spell. This ability continues to function even when you are no longer bound to Hellmouth.

Fiendish Form: You gain darkvision 60 ft, damage reduction 10/magic, resistance 10 to cold and fire, immunity to poison, spell resistance 25, and a vile smite usable three times daily that inflicts +20 profane damage against good foes. Moreover, intimate relations automatically result in pregnancy and a half-fiend child rapidly comes to term in 9 hours. The offspring is friendly to its parents only if they are evil. A *remove curse* spell or greater magic ends the pregnancy.

Malebolge Apotheosis: You gain the physical appearance and powers of a malebolge master devil. You gain its abilities except for its pactmaking, alignment, and mental attributes

(Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma). That is, you can use ash-en form, fiendish possession, summon devil, and its spell-like abilities. You can assume or end this form as a standard action.

Malebolge devils rightly perceive you as a semi-divine being and you enjoy a +10 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks with these devils and their hell hounds.

If you wish, you may make the effect permanent beyond your pact with Hellmouth. When you do so, you immediately lose 5 levels if you become a malebolge minion or 10 levels if you become a malebolge master. You become that devil except you retain your alignment and attributes and you advance the devil by applying all remaining levels of your character class. For example, if you are a 26th level binder, you can become a 21st-level malebolge minion binder. The transformation can only be reversed by a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

Mephistopheles' Mace: You are proficient with the mace and can wield a mace normally suitable for a creature one size larger than yourself without penalty. Any mace you wield delivers normal damage + 2d6 bludgeoning damage + 2d6 fire damage + 2d6 profane damage. Moreover, a good creature that is struck by the mace must succeed on a Will save or be dazed for 1 round as visions of torture flood its mind.

Prison of the Damned: This works like the Malebolge Moors' consign to hell capstone granted ability (*VoPM*, pg 82) except you may choose which of the thirteen torture chambers your target is sent to, and if the target dies while consigned then it is trapped there permanently, repeatedly subject to resurrection and then re-killed for eternity or until rescued.

Skin of Evil: All of your evil impulses, sinful acts, and impure thoughts well up onto the surface of your body and form a tarry, spiky armor. The skin provides a +10 natural armor bonus. Also, any natural or manufactured weapon that touches your body suffers 1d4 damage + 1 point per binder level, or half that amount if it is magical (or makes a Fortitude save in the case of natural attacks). Manufactured weapons also become stuck to you unless the attacker succeeds on a DC 24 Strength check. You may end the sticking effect at any time as a free action. Finally, you can attack with the spiky growths that inflict 2d6 piercing damage and 2d6 vile damage and inflict 1 point of constitution drain (no save). You can show or hide the armor as a swift action. There is a 2% chance per round when showing the armor that it completely falls off of your body to become a pool of black ink that quickly vanishes and leaves you naked and unnaturally pure; your alignment immediately changes to lawful good and Hellmouth is immediately expelled. You like your new alignment and resist attempts to change it.

Summon Fiendish Lovers: You conjure three erinyes, incubi, or succubi. Unlike normal fiends of their kind, they are utterly devoted to you, remaining for the entire day or until they die on your behalf. Moreover, you enjoy telepathic contact with each of them out to any distance, you are immune to all of their magical abilities, and they are immune to all mind-affecting effects not produced by you.

Summon Malebolge Devils: Up to three times daily, you summon one master malebolge devil and five malebolge minions. They remain for 1 hour or until dismissed. They obey your commands to the letter, which may result in an unpleasant twisting of orders not in your favor. If you should be unconscious or dead when their time of service expires, they return with your body if possible to the Malebolge Remnant.

Welling of the River Styx: You cause a wide swath of ground to produce putrid inky water that slowly forms a river. The

affected area is up to 120 ft wide and 1 mile long and radiates overwhelming evil. The river can form a circle, wander randomly, or run straight. The river can only appear in natural terrain (that is, never inside a structure or urban area).

The river takes 1 minute to appear. Each round after the first, 10% of squares in the affected area are inundated and a creature that finds itself in an inundated square may attempt a Reflex save to hop into a nearby dry square. The chance there is a nearby dry square equals 100% minus 10% for each round after the first (90% on round 2, 80% on round 3 and so forth to 0% on round 11).

A creature that fails to avoid the water immediately suffers 6d6 profane damage and must succeed on a Will save or be confused. Moreover, all of its nonmagical gear immediately melts away like water. When a creature dies in the river, or is thrown into the river within 3 rounds of death, its body melts into the river and its soul is swept into the Malebolge Remnant.

Creatures may attempt to move to a dry patch. The chance of a nearby patch is as indicated above, and the creature makes it on a successful Will save as it struggles to hold to a purpose.

The river is tarry and unnatural such that a swim speed and the Swim skill offer no aid. Moreover, only you and outsider type creatures can fly over the river; all others that attempt to fly over immediately descend into its waters instead.

Side Effects

A failed binding check with Hellmouth causes one or more side effects, determined at random. The result is known only to the game master and revealed as a surprise.

d8 Roll	Side Effect
1	Your alignment changes permanently. Roll 1d4, where 1 is lawful evil, 2 is neutral evil, 3 is chaotic evil, and 4 is neutral good. You prefer your new alignment and resist attempts to change it.
2	You immediately realize that you have a choice. Either you voluntarily allow yourself to be subject to Hellmouth's eternal damnation ability, or you allow 1 innocent creature per binder level (with 4 Hit Dice or less) to be subject to the ability instead. The effect is instantaneous once you decide. You must choose before the pact with Hellmouth expires. If the pact ends without a choice, there is a 50/50 chance of either result.
3	You experience overwhelming urges to commit horrendously wicked deeds before the pact expires. Acceptable deeds include murder, torture, maiming, rape and so forth against an innocent person or creature. You must harm at least six different targets. If you fail to commit these acts before the pact expires, you combust from the inside out, suffering 25d6 vile damage and turning to a fine ash if you die.
4	Your senses are assaulted by horrifying visions of the damned. The horror leaves you shaken for 24 hours.
5	If you should die while bound with Hellmouth, your soul is immediately trapped in the body of the nearest crow, wolf, or snake. Magic less than epic power cannot reveal your location or free your soul. The creature does not age and is effectively immortal, but if it is killed, your soul is snuffed out. Only the kiss of a paladin can end the magic and free you.
6	You are instantly slain and reincarnated as a tiefling. You suffer level loss due to death. You remain a tiefling when the binding ends.
7	You are possessed by an overwhelming spirit of hate, angst, and contempt. For the duration of the binding, you are affected by the <i>confusion</i> spell whenever you use one of your granted abilities.
8	Up to 33 Hit Dice of fiendish outsiders (usually, malebolge devils) appear via a magical gate within 1 mile of your location and slay all evil- and neutral-aligned living things in their path as they seek you out to destroy you.